

# MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

## Regular Meeting September 8, 2014 Lincoln Center

**PRESENT:** Crockett, Hagenow, Leon, Pattacini, Pazda, Scappaticci, Stafford, Thames

**ALSO PRESENT:** Superintendent of Schools Geary, Assistant to the Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Radikas

**ABSENT:** Cruz

### **A. OPENING**

#### **A.1.& 2. Meeting Called to Order**

**Chairperson Pattacini** called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini.

#### **A.3. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of August 25, 2014. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

**8/0 – Voted in favor.**

### **B. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Mr. Geary** presented ten items on the Consent Calendar for Board approval.

#### **B.1. Personnel Action**

Details had already been provided to the Board members with their agenda.

#### **B.2. Permission to apply for the 21st Century Grant, Waddell Elementary, for FY14/15 in the amount of \$200,000**

**B.3. Permission to apply for the Bilingual Education Program Grant for FY14/15 in the amount of \$9,665**

**B.4. Establish an appropriation for FY14/15 for the Manchester Head Start, State Department of Education Services Grant in the amount of \$99,655**

**B.5. Establish an appropriation for FY14/15 for the Alliance District Grant in the amount of \$3,857,041**

**B.6. Increase the Manchester Head Start appropriation for FY14/15 in the amount of \$60,821 bringing the total appropriation to \$1,169,102**

**B.7. Increase the Enfield Head Start appropriation for FY14/15 in the amount of \$52,735, bringing the total appropriation to \$813,097**

**B.8. Establish an appropriation for FY14-16 for the preliminary grant award amount of \$64,241 under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 619, to be funded by the U.S. Dept. of Education**

**B.9. Establish an appropriation for FY14-16 for the preliminary grant award amount of \$1,578,625, under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 611, to be funded by the U.S. Dept. of Education**

**B.10. Transfer of Funds**

Details had already been provided to the Board members in their agenda folders.

- Transfer from MRA Special Education Instructional Supplies and Materials account to MRA Special Education Rentals account in the amount of \$300

**The Chairman called for a motion.**

**Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in tonight's agenda.**

**8/0 - Voted in favor.**

**C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Autumn Struk, 26 Little Street, was speaking on behalf of the Project Playground proposal for Waddell. She provided flyers to the Board members regarding a Fun Run fundraiser planned for Saturday, October 4<sup>th</sup>; pictures of projected structures; and a

timeline of the project. Ms. Struk reviewed she had met with Dr. Kisiel a year ago, who approved the project. Since May 2013 they have raised approximately \$4,000 of the anticipated \$76-96,000 needed. The fundraiser October 4<sup>th</sup> will have 13 vendors and the hope is for all students to raise \$100 or more. Ms. Struk also spoke about the PTA, noting if anyone wanted to join the Townwide PTA, which is membership in all 12 schools, the cost is \$66 and checks can be made payable to CT-PTA this evening or sent to Mary Klotzer at Illing PTA.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, spoke about the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War I and he recommends Social Studies teachers at the middle and high school use the illustrated history book by Andrew Weiss in their curriculum. Mr. Stringfellow again reminded us that the traveling Vietnam memorial will be exhibited next spring. He recommended the book *Day by Day* regarding the Vietnam War for teachers to use. Mr. Stringfellow told us that Hispanic Heritage Month begins September 15. He noted this is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Panama Canal. He mentioned the Civil War in 1864 and the election of President Lincoln, whose stance against slavery cost him his life in April 1965.

#### **D. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I**

##### **D.1. Update on First Day of School**

**Mr. Geary** stated the opening of school August 28<sup>th</sup> was successful. Pre-K through grade 9 started that day, with grades 10-12 starting August 29<sup>th</sup>. Some highlights included Illing opening smoothly, with the construction over the summer being completed in time for the first day other than punch-list items and Power Hour at MHS has been successful so far. Enrollment has increased significantly at Verplanck. They ended last school year in June with 375 students and as of day 5 this year the enrollment is 449. To accommodate the increase art and music classrooms were taken over and those classes are being taught on a cart in each class. Robertson also saw a significant increase in enrollment, from 356 in June to 416 on day 5. Mr. Geary stated they are working on how best to service the students.

**Mr. Leon** wondered how the increase in enrollment compared with the demographic study recently done. Mr. Geary stated we are about 40 students over the prediction; however the main areas impacted were the two schools mentioned above.

##### **D.2. Overview of Curriculum & Instruction**

**Dr. Radikas** and Dr. Oliver were present to discuss the overview of Curriculum & Instruction. Dr. Radikas' presentation can be seen in full on the website. The three areas of work were focused on curriculum, professional learning and assessment, data, and resources. Dr. Radikas noted that teachers worked on Curriculum

Academy over the summer, then provided professional development for their colleagues.

Dr. Radikas noted the library is the hub of a school and she touched on changes in the role of library media specialists. She notes we are fortunate to have library media specialists in all of our schools.

Constructive Play in Kindergarten was discussed, and teachers have 30 boxes of different suggestions that will be rotating through town. Dr. Radikas hopes Board members will visit Kindergarten classes this year to witness the play.

Dr. Radikas also touched on the tutor situation in town. She noted that ELL tutors previously worked 25 hours over 4 days and this year they will instead work 25 hours spread over 5 days so the children have services every day. Regarding other tutors, assignments may be changed based on need by October 1<sup>st</sup>.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century After school Program already existed at Robertson, Verplanck, and Washington. These programs start 9/15 and run until the last day of school, which is an extended year over previous years. The program is expanding this year to Bowers and Waddell. These programs will start in October. All programs will be serving a light dinner instead of a snack this year.

Dr. Radikas presented CMT and CAPT data in Science. She noted that the Smarter Balance pilot given last year was not to yield data, but to validate the test that will be given this year in ELA and Math.

**Ms. Pazda** liked the great stuff she was hearing. In regards to the CMT and CAPT scores in science, she wondered about assessing worthy science content. Dr. Radikas stated the assessment is based on State science standards and not next generation science standards. She notes we must assess by statute and we will be looking at ways for the after school program to provide more science experience, along with the PTA (Science Fairs) and other opportunities throughout the district.

Ms. Pazda asked about the after school curriculum. Dr. Radikas stated it will not just be about homework but she will be bringing in science opportunities, the Lutz, and an opportunity for the stipend position of a science specialist K-6 doing some work with after school. She will work to provide the same opportunities for all schools, not just those with after school programs. Ms. Pazda was impressed, but noted the after school program is only in Title I schools. Though she felt the data was grim, it is being used to move forward with student centered plans and goals.

**Mr. Leon** wondered why there was no cohort data. Dr. Radikas stated she can run that data, however it would yield minimal results as there is much movement with students coming and going throughout the district.

**Ms. Pazda** noted that Family Resource Centers are only in Title I schools and she is glad Dr. Radikas understands that all families need these services and is working on ways to provide that.

**Mr. Geary** pointed out that MELC (Manchester Early Learning Center) is present for before and after school programs in all schools and Dr. Radikas has been writing curriculum for their staff as well.

**Mr. Pattacini** wanted to know when we can expect to see data from Smarter Balance. Dr. Radikas stated the live version of the assessment will provide data in 2015. The pilot was only to gather data to be sure the questions provided were valid and reliable. That data will not be released to us as they would not be relevant. Mr. Pattacini asked how we are finding guidance in other areas. Dr. Radikas listed NWEA, DRA, Fountas & Pinnell, benchmark assessments, fact fluency and other progress monitoring. She noted NWEA data will be available at the end of October for ELA and Math and writing at the end of November. Pattacini was glad to hear about the investment in science and is encouraged by the work being done. Dr. Radikas thanked Dr. Oliver for her hard work.

### **D.3. Thank you from Problem Solvers**

**Mr. Geary** showed a presentation from the FPS team that competed in the International competition in Iowa. The students placed 4<sup>th</sup>, led by teacher Samantha Randazzo.

**Mr. Pattacini** thanked the administration for their support of programs like this and Mr. Leon for being a parent chaperone on the trip. Parent involvement and community support is very important.

### **D.4. Update on Building Project Timeline**

**Mr. Geary** reviewed the referendum that will be on the ballot in November and the goals.

- All elementary schools to have a 21<sup>st</sup> century environment
- Utilize space at Bennet and Highland Park
- Class sizes of 17-22
- Buildings improved and repaired
- Efficient use of elementary classroom space
- Minimal student moves and relocations
- Sustainable racial balance in all elementary schools
- A cost effective plan that optimizes state reimbursement.

Phase I of the plan calls for a renovation to the Cheney building to house grade 5; a like-new Verplanck to accommodate 525 students; a like-new renovation to Waddell to accommodate 525 students; and closing Washington and Robertson. Phase II includes renovations at all the other elementary schools.

The impacts of this plan include:

- 21<sup>st</sup> Century facilities
- Art, music, and science spaces
- World language to begin at the elementary level
- Family Resource Centers
- School based health centers
- Potential room for Pre-K

Mr. Geary noted a brochure is in the works to be distributed for information, along with a calendar of events, and information sessions. He will be visiting faculty meetings and PTA meetings and individual meetings can be scheduled with the Superintendent. The Superintendent's TV show will be starting and Facts & Questions will be on the website.

**Mr. Scappaticci** pointed out the amazing difference in the Robertson library with just some paint and decals. He notes that visual culture can impact learning. One item he often gets questions about is what the tax impact will be for voters. Mr. Geary stated that information is being double checked currently and will be on the website soon.

**Ms. Pazda** also loved the changes in the Robertson library.

**Mr. Pattacini** wondered how the brochure will be disseminated. Mr. Geary reviewed all students will bring them home, mailings will be done, and the information will be available on the school and town website in order to get the information out to the people of Manchester so people can make an informed decision based on this accurate information.

#### **E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

#### **F. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

#### **G. COMMUNICATIONS**

**Ms. Hagenow** noted she was not present at the last Board meeting and she neglected to abstain on the vote to accept the minutes. Mr. Pattacini stated she is entitled to

approve the minutes even though she was not in attendance, so the record can stand if she is in favor. She was.

#### **H. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

#### **I. PUBLIC COMMENTS** (Limited to items on tonight's agenda)

Ms. Autumn Struk, 26 Little Street, wondered if the estimate includes the cafeteria and gym expansion at Waddell. She notes the FRC took over half the space of the Waddell cafeteria. Ms. Struk wondered if the referendum in November would be the entire Phase I or just the 5/6 academy plan with the rest of Phase I being a Spring referendum. Last, she noted that the diagrams for Waddell only listed paved play space and adequate playground space. She wondered, with the fundraising currently happening for a playground at Waddell, if a playground space will be part of the plan. She notes the current playground is out of code and compliance and they will be looking to the town to help with funding a new playground.

**Mr. Geary** responded to Ms. Struk. He noted the FRC will be relocated in the renovated Verplanck and Waddell and there are multiple options, these sketches are just rough ideas. The referendum for November will incorporate all of Phase I plus the improvements at the high school of \$3 million. There will be adequate playground space for both Verplanck and Waddell after renovation.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the Consent Calendar, especially the bilingual grant. He congratulated the Problem Solving team, noting creative minds are a good thing. Regarding Common Core, the August 25<sup>th</sup> *TIME* magazine had an article on the pro's and con's. He thinks it is here to stay and there is information out there regarding it so the public cannot feign ignorance on the topic. Regarding students and sleep, he suggested an article in the *Minipage*. Mr. Stringfellow would like to have a presentation from Rhonda Philbert regarding equity and teacher training and from Dr. Eastlake on the Gifted Program. He wants to see more students of color participate in the Gifted Program. He states this is his 5<sup>th</sup> request regarding these topics. Regarding healthy lunches, he wonders if nurses should be involved to make sure students are eating. Another article suggestion from the September 7<sup>th</sup> *New York Times* was "Why Most Men Don't Go Into Teaching". Mr. Stringfellow hopes for a better school year.

#### **J. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

None.

#### **K. ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.**

**Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Leon seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.**

**8/0 - Voted in favor.**

**Adjournment 8:17 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci  
Board Secretary